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Thirty-second session
11-22 May 1992
Agenda item 9

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FIRST PART OF ITS THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Miss Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

1. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) held an organizational meeting (1st meeting) at United Nations Headquarters on 10 April 1992 and the first part of its thirty-second session at United Nations Headquarters from 11 to 22 May. It held ___ meetings (2nd to _____ meetings).

A. Agenda

2. The agenda for the thirty-second session, adopted by the Committee at its 1st meeting, is reproduced in annex I.

3. In adopting the agenda, the Committee, in accordance with the decision taken at its twenty-fourth session, 1/ decided to consider at its thirty-second session the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Reporting on the performance and results of United Nations programmes: monitoring, evaluation and management review components" and comments of the Secretary-General (A/43/124 and Add.1), as mandated by the General Assembly in its decision 46/446 of 20 December 1991.

B. Election of officers

4. At its 1st, 3rd and 4th meetings, on 10 April 1992 and 11 and 12 May 1992, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: Mr. Kees W. Spaans (Netherlands)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Yukio Sugano (Japan)
Mr. Jan Woroniecki (Poland)
Mr. David Etuket (Uganda)

Rapporteur: Miss Sally E. Moss (Bahamas)

C. Attendance

5. The following States members of the Committee were represented:

Algeria
Argentina
Bahamas
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burundi
Cameroon
Chile
China
Colombia
Congo
France
Germany
Ghana
India
Indonesia
Iraq
Italy
Japan
Morocco
Netherlands
Nigeria
Norway
Pakistan
Poland
Russian Federation
Trinidad and Tobago
Uganda
Ukraine
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America
Uruguay
Zambia

6. The following States Members of the United Nations were represented by observers:

Australia
Austria
Cuba
Finland
Hungary
Ireland
Kenya
Nicaragua
Portugal
Romania
Spain
Sweden
Thailand
Togo
Tunisia
United Republic of Tanzania

7. The following specialized agencies were represented:

International Labour Organisation

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

World Health Organization

International Monetary Fund

8. Also present at the session were the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, the Acting Controller and other senior officials of the United Nations Secretariat, including the representatives of the Department of Economic and Social Development, the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Centre for Human Rights, the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). At the invitation of the Committee, Mr. Siegfried Schumm, Inspector of the Joint Inspection Unit, also participated in its work.

D. Documentation

9. The list of documents before the Committee at its thirty-second session is contained in annex II.

E. Adoption of the report of the Committee

10. At its ____ to ___ meetings, on and May 1992, the Committee adopted the draft report on the first part of its thirty-second session (E/AC.51/1992/L.3 and Add.1-).

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 38 (A/39/38), para. 388.

ANNEX I

Agenda for the thirty-second session of the Committee

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

3. Review of the programme of work of the Committee and suggestions on the timing and duration of its sessions.

4. Programme questions:

   (a) Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1990-1991;

   (b) Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997;

   (c) Outline of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995;

   (d) Methodology for the preparation of the programme budget;

   (e) Evaluation;

   (f) Questions related to the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

5. Coordination questions:

   (a) Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and preparations for the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination;

   (b) System-wide plan of action for African economic recovery and development;

   (c) Preparation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001.

6. Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.

7. Reports of the Joint Inspection Unit.

8. Provisional agenda for the thirty-third session of the Committee.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its thirty-second session.

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

IV. COORDINATION QUESTIONS

A. Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and preparations for the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination

C. Preparation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001

1. At its 2nd to 5th meetings, on 11 and 12 May, the Committee considered the annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1991 (E/1992/11 and Add.1 and 2), the report of the Chairmen of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination on the twenty-sixth series of Joint Meetings of the two Committees (E/1991/143) and the report of the Secretary-General on the preparation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1991-2001 (E/1992/6).

Discussion

2. The Committee had an extensive and wide-ranging discussion of the report of ACC, during which many issues relating to both the content and the format of the report, as well as to the substantive issues addressed in it, were considered.

3. A number of delegations were of the view that the transition in the States of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States was a challenge to the organizations of the United Nations system and might call for additional resources to fully respond to it. Other delegations stated that it might place a further potential strain on United Nations resources.

4. A number of delegations expressed reservations about the principle of zero real budget growth referred to in the report, noting that zero real growth had never been established as a principle. Other delegations supported the approach of zero real growth, and recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 45/255 concerning the recommendations of the Committee, had requested that a proposal by the Secretary-General predicated that zero real growth in recurrent expenditure should constitute the basis for the preparations of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

5. The Committee took note of the statement made by the Secretariat, according to which a temporary suspension of external recruitment was imposed with a view to enabling an orderly implementation of the restructuring process and that similar decisions had been taken by the governing bodies of other organs.

6. A number of delegations supported the convening of a conference on financing for development as proposed by the Secretary-General. Some delegations noted that the convening of such a conference would be considered by the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

7. A number of delegations questioned the apparent lack of commitment on the part of Governments to combat desertification, which was noted in the report.

8. A number of delegations expressed concern about and asked for more precise information relating to the carrying out of the functions that were previously exercised by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation and about new focal points for United Nations responsibilities related to African economic recovery and development and the follow-up of the Chernobyl accident. The Secretariat explained that the responsibilities entrusted to the Office of the Director-General had been transferred to the Department of Economic and Social Development, including the focal point responsibility related to African economic recovery and development. Arrangements for the setting-up of a focal point for the follow-up of the Chernobyl accident were being discussed within the Secretariat.

9. A number of delegations expressed concern about the financial situation of the Development Forum and requested that it be funded from the regular budget. Other delegations questioned its continued usefulness. At the same time, it was noted that satisfaction had been expressed in that respect by the targeted audience through their answers to the readers' survey.

10. Some delegations were concerned about the possible interruption of the unique activities of the Non-Governmental Liaison Service, owing to a lack of solid funding, at a time when organizations of the United Nations system had already indicated their support for the principle of establishing that Service as a jointly financed activity.

11. A number of delegations expressed satisfaction with the contribution of the Joint Meetings of CPC and ACC with regard to substantive proposals for in-depth discussion during sessions of the Economic and Social Council.

Conclusions and recommendations

The annual overview report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

12. The Committee regretted the late issuance of some documentation and stressed that improved planning for the timely issuance of documents by the Secretariat was needed.

13. At a time of profound change in international relations, the Committee saw a greater need for enhanced and improved coordination in the United Nations system, both at headquarters and field levels. The intention of the Secretary-General, as Chairman of ACC, to assign a high priority to coordination and to work with his colleagues on ACC to develop new approaches for collaboration was welcomed.

14. The intention of ACC to review its role and functioning, including the functioning of its subsidiary machinery, was welcomed. The Committee agreed that the review should take into account all relevant guidance of intergovernmental bodies.

15. The Committee also encouraged ACC to rationalize its practices and procedures so that coordination could be carried out with greater effectiveness and efficiency.

16. The Committee reaffirmed the critical role of the ACC itself and emphasized its linkages with the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies in strengthening system-wide coherence and coordination, particularly in the light of General Assembly resolution 45/264.

17. The Committee recognized that further improvements had been made in the format of the ACC annual overview report for 1991 (E/1992/11 and Add.1 and 2). At the same time there was general agreement that further improvement was

urgently needed. The report was considered too descriptive in nature. A more analytical and forward-looking report was necessary in order to facilitate the tasks and responsibilities regarding coordination of the respective organizations which were members of the ACC. The Committee emphasized that the purpose of the report was to serve as an instrument to enable both Member States and ACC to identify and overcome problems in system-wide coordination.

18. The Committee stressed the importance of coordination at the field level and highlighted the role of the United Nations resident coordinator. The Committee looked forward to the outcome of the review of the field presence of the United Nations currently being carried out by the Secretary-General.

19. The Committee requested the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chairman of the ACC to continue his efforts to coordinate assistance to countries which have invoked Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations on the grounds that they have suffered serious economic difficulties. The Committee requested the ACC to incorporate in its next annual overview report relevant information on measures undertaken by agencies pursuant to this request.

20. The Committee noted the statement made by the Secretariat that the question of coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton-Woods institutions would be considered at the 1992 session of the Council.

21. The Committee underlined the need to implement General Assembly resolutions 45/190 and 46/150 on coordination of international cooperation to mitigate the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant taking account also of the relevant decision of the UNDP Governing Council.

22. The Committee noted that the Secretary-General would submit to the Committee at its resumed session a draft system-wide plan of action for African economic recovery and development as called for by the General Assembly taking account also of the Committee's recommendations on the system-wide plan of action on drugs.

23. The Committee stressed that the Secretary-General, in preparing the draft system-wide plan, should be in full conformity with the recommendations of the Committee at its thirtieth and thirty-first sessions, endorsed by the General Assembly, regarding the structure, format and content of the system-wide plan. In this regard, the Committee stressed that the draft system-wide plan should identify problem areas requiring multilateral attention and action. It should include updated analytical and action-oriented proposals with a clear delineation of the responsibilities of each agency, goals to be attained and indications of resources required and available.

Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination

24. The Committee took note of the report of the twenty-sixth series of Joint Meetings of the two Committees (E/1991/143).

25. The Committee reaffirmed the potential of the Joint Meetings as a forum for dialogue between Member States and executive heads and recommended that the Joint Meetings be reviewed against that criterion, and that the documentation should be prepared in consultation with the CPC or its Bureau and issued in due time.

26. The Committee was of the view that the topic for the Joint Meetings should be selected ahead of time so that the dialogue could be of interest for all participants while being well focused and leading to specific conclusions.

27. The Committee, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 45/264, decided to return to the questions of the timing and topic of the twenty-seventh series of the Joint Meetings at its resumed session.

Preparation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001

28. The Committee took note of the report on the preparation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001 (E/1992/6), and the fact that the plan was still in a preparatory process.

29. The Committee proposed that subprogramme 4.2, "Eradication of violence against women in the family and society", should be placed under programme 1, "Elimination of legal and attitudinal forms of discrimination". The Committee also proposed that dangers to women in armed conflict should be reflected in programme 4, "Promotion of peace and conflict resolution".

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Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Miss Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

III. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

E. Evaluation

1. At its 3rd and 5th through 8th meetings, on 11 through 14 May 1992, the Committee considered three evaluation reports. At its 6th and 8th meetings, on 13 and 14 May 1992, the Committee considered the oral report given by the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Development as announced in the note by the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/1992/4) of 30 March 1992.

Conclusions and recommendation

2. The Committee confirmed the importance of evaluation for improving the effectiveness of United Nations programmes and for ensuring the efficient use of limited resources, and expressed satisfaction with the quality of the reports on the major programme on social development and humanitarian affairs (E/AC.51/1992/2) and the human rights programme (E/AC.51/1992/3).

3. The Committee recommended that the preparation and distribution of documentation should be further improved through better planning by the Secretariat.

1. Programme evaluation in the United Nations: assessment of evaluation activities and proposals for strengthening the role of evaluation

Discussion

4. A number of delegations considered that the report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/47/116) contained useful assessments of United Nations evaluation activities of the recent past and suggestions for strengthening evaluation in the future. A number of delegations were, however, of the view that some parts of the report should have been more analytical and action-oriented. One delegation stated that the report lacked a "pedagogical approach" and was presented in a somewhat abstract manner. With regard to the conference room papers on new directions for evaluation in professional literature (E/AC.51/1992/CRP.1) and self-evaluations conducted during 1986-1991 (E/AC.51/1992/CRP.2), they were considered useful as reference and welcomed by a number of delegations.

5. Concern was voiced that self-evaluation had not yet been widely accepted by programme managers as a management tool, and that only a limited percentage of subprogrammes had so far been evaluated. A number of delegations suggested that the cause might have been the lack of an evaluation "culture" in the Secretariat and that, to the extent that programme managers did not conduct self-evaluations, Governments were deprived of information on the implementation of programmes.

6. A number of delegations stressed the need for both external and internal evaluations, since they tended to complement each other, but stated that more emphasis should be put on external evaluations, i.e. those independent of the line of authority relating to programme managers but preferably not outside the Organization or the United Nations system.

7. One delegation proposed the establishment of an Office of Inspector-General. The proposal received support from one other delegation.

8. The following topics for in-depth evaluation for 1996 and 1997 were mentioned in the discussion: environment, human rights, international trade, narcotic drugs and statistics.

Conclusions and recommendations

9. The Committee concluded that methodology for self-evaluation needed to be improved and some central standard-setting was now required, and that training in programme evaluation, including questionnaire formulation and sampling techniques, should also be improved. The Committee also concluded that findings from self-evaluation should be reported by programme managers to their respective governing bodies and that reports on the results of self-evaluations should be placed on the agendas of the specialized governing bodies concerned so that they could discuss those results. The mode of

transmission to specialized intergovernmental bodies of in-depth evaluation reports, together with the relevant recommendations of the Committee should be improved.

10. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly, when examining the recommendations contained in paragraphs 52 through 61 of the report, should take into account the following:

(a) Proposals for strengthening evaluation capacity, as suggested in paragraph 59 of the report, would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking account of paragraphs 348-350 of the Committee's report on the work of its thirtieth session in 1990 (A/45/16), and the Secretary-General's overall restructuring plan for the Secretariat;

(b) The arrangements for requesting, from the relevant specialized governing bodies comments on evaluation reports, as proposed in paragraph 61 of the report, as well as the conclusions and recommendations of the Committee thereon, would be adopted on a case-by-case basis, as decided by the Committee.

11. The Committee took note of the recommendation contained in paragraph 62 of the report.

12. The Committee postponed the decision on the topics for in-depth evaluation for 1996 and 1997.

2. In-depth evaluation of the major programme on social development and humanitarian affairs

Discussion

13. Some specific observations were made on the methodological recommendations for the in-depth evaluation. It was noted that the proposed methodology narrowly focused on the use of questionnaires as an instrument of data collection; another delegation suggested the inclusion of regional evaluation results in the in-depth report. The exclusion from the in-depth study of activities on crime prevention and criminal justice and the advancement of women was also discussed.

14. A number of delegations noted with concern the lack of progress in the integration of economic and social activities in practice, in spite of support for that integration in principle, as well as the inadequacy of resources devoted to programmes on social development. The Committee also noted the observation in paragraph 45 (a) of the report that "international awareness of the problems and needs of specific groups (the ageing, the disabled, women) has increased, but the increased awareness has not been translated into significant operational activities to support national efforts".

Conclusions and recommendations

15. The Committee noted with appreciation that the progress report on the in-depth evaluation of the major programme on social development and humanitarian affairs (E/AC.51/1992/2) contained preliminary information on the effectiveness of the programme and the Secretariat's recommendations on the scope of the in-depth evaluation, the issues to be addressed and the methods of data collection.

16. The Committee endorsed the methodological recommendations for the in-depth evaluation contained in paragraphs 49 through 55 of the progress report.

3. Triennial review of the human rights programme

Discussion

17. Delegations expressed their satisfaction with the quality and honesty of the report on the triennial review of the human rights programme (E/AC.51/1992/3). A number of delegations stated that the report's presentation of the various, sometimes conflicting viewpoints was the right approach for future triennial reviews, and perhaps for evaluation in general.

18. A number of delegations expressed concern about the problems faced by the Centre on Human Rights due to resource constraints. On the other hand, some delegations pointed out that despite these constraints much could and should be done. A number of delegations expressed their hope that the current temporary freeze in hiring would not affect the recruitment of additional staff needed by the Centre.

19. The importance of establishing a human rights database was recognized, and an offer of financial assistance was made by one delegation.

20. Coordination issues were recognized as very important, particularly the coordination between the Centre and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as that with non-governmental organizations, taking into account, as appropriate, the different mandates of respective bodies. A number of delegations stressed the importance of technical assistance provided by the Centre to countries. A number of delegations thought the role of Advisory Services should be more catalytic. Reservations were made by a number of delegations concerning the need for a full-time staff member for the Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the involvement of non-governmental organizations in drafting new international instruments.

Recommendations

21. The Committee endorsed the recommendations contained in paragraphs 115 to 117 and 119 to 128 of the report on the understanding that United Nations organs perform their functions in accordance with their mandates; with regard to paragraph 125, the Committee was of the view that, in the drafting of any new international instruments, as may be decided, the involvement of non-governmental organizations would be in conformity with existing practice.

22. The Committee took note of the recommendation contained in paragraph 118.

23. The Committee recommended that, wherever possible, future triennial reviews should follow the presentation used in this report.

4. Progress report on the major programme on science and technology

Discussion

24. A number of delegations recalled General Assembly resolution 46/185 B and reaffirmed their view that the restructuring effected by the Secretary-General should not imply a standstill in activity nor should it affect the implementation of the existing mandates and the accomplishment of tasks in this area.

25. One delegation stated its appreciation of the oral report by the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Development. It considered that the requested report of the Secretary-General would no longer be useful and proposed that the issue be postponed indefinitely. A number of delegations were of the opinion that the oral report could not replace the report requested and that its presentation would have enabled the Secretariat, inter alia, to describe the rationale behind the restructuring of its coordination and support unit for the major programme on science and technology.

26. A number of delegations expressed great concern that full implementation of the General Assembly's resolutions on science and technology for development might be impaired in case of reduction of resources assigned to the major programme on science and technology as a consequence of the restructuring of both legislative organs and the Secretariat.

27. A number of delegations noticed a lack of explicit reference in the oral report to environmental issues in spite of their relevance to the work of the United Nations in science and technology and in particular to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and Agenda 21.

Conclusions and recommendations

28. The Committee expressed regret that the report requested at its thirtieth session, which was to have contained a conclusive analysis and proposals for solving the problems associated with the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development, had not been prepared and took note of the explanations provided by the Secretariat.

29. The Committee decided to discuss the issue of science and technology for development in the context of the forthcoming revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 and the revised estimates of the 1992-1993 programme budget at its resumed session, in order to determine whether, in the light of the information contained in the revisions to the major programme on science and technology for development and the revised estimates, additional information would be needed for the thirty-third session of the Committee.

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Rapporteur: Miss Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

V. REPORTS OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT

1. At its 6th and 8th meetings on 13 and 14 May, the Committee considered the report of the Joint Inspection Unit entitled "Reporting on the performance and results of the United Nations programme: monitoring, evaluation and management review components" (A/43/124), and the comments of the Secretary-General (A/43/124/Add.1).

Discussion

2. A number of delegations stressed the need for sufficient resources and training in order to promote adequate self-evaluation.

3. A number of delegations suggested that the first priority should be to improve programme design.

4. While a number of delegations supported recommendation 1 contained in the Joint Inspection Unit report, others expressed reservations regarding the workload involved and the size of the programme performance report it would entail. The latter held that submitting such a report concurrently with the proposed biennial programme budget might also raise some difficulties.

5. With respect to recommendation 2 of the report, a number of delegations were of the view that evaluation functions needed to be strengthened in a cost-effective manner. The possibility of assigning evaluation functions to an inspector-general was proposed by one delegation, while others maintained that the United Nations should rather aim at strengthening current mechanisms, such as JIU and the Board of Auditors.

6. A number of delegations supported recommendation 3 in the JIU report, while others pointed out possible difficulties in undertaking an annual in-depth review in the area of Administration and Conference Services.

7. With respect to recommendation 4, the hope was expressed that the development of an integrated management information system currently under way would contribute to the improvement of the information available for decision-making.

Conclusions and recommendations

8. The Committee expressed its concern that over the years, very little improvement had been achieved in providing the legislative bodies concerned with an analytical report on programme performance. Such an improvement was considered essential for Member States to take informed decisions on programmes of work, including the identification of ineffective activities and reformulation of programmes in the light of emerging priorities.

9. The Committee noted with appreciation the high quality of the report and expressed agreement with its diagnosis of the imperfections in reporting on performance and results achieved under the United Nations work programmes. The Committee expressed dissatisfaction with many aspects of the current system for reporting performance, as well as with the limited scope of coverage of evaluation and what it perceived to be a lack of responsiveness on the part of programme managers.

10. Recalling the extensive debate over the years on this issue, the Committee concluded that a future report by the Joint Inspection Unit on the subject would not be necessary.

11. There was general agreement in the Committee that the evaluation function needed to be strengthened through a change of culture within the Secretariat, as well as through recourse to independent external evaluation.

12. The Committee expressed the view that a clearer description of the objectives to be attained and the incorporation of performance indicators would contribute to a better formulation of the programme budget and a more effective system of monitoring and evaluation.

13. The need to clarify the different concepts of evaluation, the monitoring of performance and inspection were emphasized. Those three different aspects of reporting complemented one another.

14. It was noted that the quantitative approach of the current system of programme performance reporting, required by the Regulations and Rules governing Programme Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation, was necessary but not nearly sufficient, and that the effectiveness of monitoring was a function of the quality of the medium-term plan and the programme budget. To the extent that those procedures were specific in quantifying outputs and activities planned and financed, the effectiveness of monitoring would be enhanced. The Committee also noted that the inclusion of self-evaluation findings on an experimental basis could constitute the basis for a more comprehensive report.

15. The Committee was informed that those issues would be addressed in the prototype of the new budget to be submitted to the Committee at its resumed session.

16. The Secretariat was invited to draw on the experiences of other organizations of the United Nations system, taking into account the specificity of the United Nations itself.

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III. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

A. Programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1990-1991

1. At its 9th and 10th meetings, on 15 May, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on programme performance of the United Nations for the biennium 1990-1991 (A/47/159 and Add.1).

2. The report was reviewed against the background of the discussion by the Committee of the Joint Inspection Unit report entitled "Reporting on the performance and results of the United Nations programmes: monitoring, evaluation and management review components" (A/43/124) and of the conclusions and recommendations made by the Committee at its thirty-first session on the methodology proposed by the Secretary-General for monitoring and reporting the programme performance of the United Nations (A/46/173).

Discussion

3. A number of delegations stated that the report remained inadequate and expressed doubts about its usefulness. They also stated that it did not provide Member States with an analytical insight of programme implementation.

Other delegations commended the clarity of the report and noted an improvement in the information provided on the changes affecting the implementation of the programmes.

4. A number of delegations expressed concern about the large number of terminations and modifications of, and additions to, programmed outputs at the initiative of programme managers and requested assurance that the provision of regulation 5.2 relating to monitoring of programme implementation had been adhered to.

Conclusions and recommendations

5. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat improve its planning of the preparation and publication of CPC documents.

6. The Committee noted that the report (A/47/159 and Add.1) did not as yet reflect the improvements proposed by the Secretary-General in his report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (A/46/173) as the improvements were mostly predicated on the revised format of the programme budget introduced for the biennium 1992-1993. The Committee noted that they would be reflected in the revised format.

7. The Committee stressed that future reports on programme performance should balance the current quantitative approach with an analysis that would provide more useful information on the implementation of the various activities cited in the programme budget and on the departures from programmed commitments.

8. It was agreed that there was a continued role for the counting of outputs implemented against outputs programmed in the programme budget. However, while such measures could help to identify trends in implementation rates and provide accountability, the limited value of such statistics in providing an overall assessment of the implementation of the programme budget was pointed out. It was also agreed that the effectiveness of monitoring was a function of the quality of the medium-term plan and the programme budget. The effectiveness of monitoring would only be enhanced to the extent that the plan and the programme budget were specific in quantifying outputs and activities planned and financed.

9. The Committee noted that 77 per cent of the programmed outputs were implemented during the 1990-1991 biennium. However, it also noted that global rates of implementation could be misleading when all outputs were treated equally. The Committee was of the view that only through a differentiation between the diverse activities undertaken by the Organization would comparison of rates of implementation for the various activities become meaningful.

10. The rate of implementation for outputs under programme elements designated as being of the highest priority (80 per cent) was noted and the view was expressed that greater efforts should be made to implement all

activities designated high priority. The Committee noted the low implementation rate for publications (70 per cent), and reiterated the need to review the publication policies of the Organization, as called for by the General Assembly in resolution 46/185.

11. The Committee agreed that vacancy rates for the programme budget sections reviewed should be presented in a tabular format and their implications on programme performance analysed.

12. The Committee, recalling the recommendations made at its thirty-first session (A/46/16, paras. 394-400), stressed the need for a closer link between programme performance and budget performance reports. The Committee also recalled, in that connection, the recommendation concerning the establishment of a system of accountability and responsibility (A/46/16, para. 400) and General Assembly resolutions 40/185 and 46/189, in which the General Assembly endorsed those recommendations.

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Miss Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

III. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

B. Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

General considerations

Discussion

1. The Chairman, in his introduction, recalled that the medium-term plan is a basic policy document of the United Nations and that the Committee for Programme and Coordination was requested to thoroughly consider the proposed revisions. While the Committee considered the substance of the revisions, it was also invited to pay attention to the format of the plan. In that connection, he recalled General Assembly resolution 45/253, in which the Assembly called for increased conciseness of the plan. He suggested that the Committee consider revising the format of the plan, making it a more concise document with a strong emphasis on the policies of the Organization. He proposed that the Committee recommend to the General Assembly that the Secretariat should provide to the Committee at its thirty-third session a

proposal containing a possible new format of the plan, taking into account the need to be clear about the established mandates and the policy directives.

2. A number of delegations recalled that the medium-term plan was the principal policy directive of the United Nations and that the introduction to the plan was a key integral element of the planning process. They were of the view that consideration of the proposed revisions would have been greatly facilitated if the Secretary-General had submitted a document or a statement containing a comprehensive assessment of the changes that have occurred since the plan was adopted by the General Assembly in 1990 and an overview of the objectives, strategies and priorities of the Organization in the coming years. Such a document or statement would have enabled delegations to place the proposed revisions in a proper perspective.

3. A number of delegations considered that in several programmes the format and presentation of the proposed revisions did not enable them to assess the rationale for the revisions.

Conclusions and recommendations

4. The Committee took note of the statement by the Acting Controller that a number of documents would be provided to the Committee at the second part of its thirty-second session and that those documents would provide delegations with an overview of the changes that have taken place recently and the new orientations and priorities of the United Nations.

5. The Committee expressed the hope that during its resumed session the Secretary-General would be in a position to present his views to the Committee on the direction in which he would like the Organization to go and his proposals to Member States, based on an assessment of the progress made in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/232.

6. The Committee recommended that the format of the revisions to the medium-term plan to be submitted to the Committee at the second part of its thirty-second session be improved so as to facilitate their consideration by delegations. In that context, the Committee recommended that appropriate explanations be provided for the proposed changes in respect of each programme.

7. The Committee noted that the proposed revisions to 5 of the 10 programmes submitted to the first part of the session had not been reviewed by the relevant intergovernmental bodies. The Committee reiterated the need to improve the consultative process with Member States and recommended that appropriate measures be devised for that purpose.

8. The Committee agreed that while the conclusions and recommendations of the first part of its thirty-second session reflected the Committee's views on specific programmes, those conclusions and recommendations could be adjusted,

if necessary, during the second part of its thirty-second session in the light of the relevant information to be provided.

9. The Committee agreed to continue to consider the issue of the format of the medium-term plan and ways in which it could become a more effective tool for programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation, during the second part of its thirty-second session.

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ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FIRST PARTY OF ITS THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Draft report

Addendum

Rapporteur: Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997

Programme 25. Global social issues and policies

1. At its 12th meeting, on 18 May, the Committee considered proposed revisions to programme 25 (Global social issues and policies) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/47/6 (Prog. 25)).

Discussion

2. While the central role of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs in carrying out research and analysis was recognized, a number of delegations emphasized the need for better reflection of coordinating mechanisms in the context of the programme.

Conclusions and recommendations

3. The Committee expressed the view that future activities that might fall under programme 25 were likely to be affected by the recommendations that the Economic and Social Council might make to the General Assembly on the convening of a World Social Summit and might require further review.

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4. The Committee recommended the approval of the revisions to programme 25 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, with the following modifications:

(a) In paragraph 25.1, a reference to General Assembly resolution 46/95 should be added;

(b) In paragraph 25.7, nineteenth line, the words "in particular with other bodies of the United Nations system dealing with the economics of social protection and social welfare" should be inserted after the words "social development activities";

(c) In paragraph 25.8, the words "Department of Technical Cooperation for Development" should be replaced by the words "Department of Economic and Social Development";

(d) In paragraph 25.11, a reference to General Assembly resolution 46/95 should be added;

(e) In paragraph 25.21, sixth line, the word "role" should read "roles"; in the tenth line, the words "as well as types" should be inserted after the word "concepts"; in the twelfth line, the words "the variety of" should be inserted after the words "understanding of";

(f) In paragraph 25.23, sixth line, the words "and its members" should be added after the words "the role of the family".

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 1992-1997

Programme 26, Integration of social groups

1. At its 12th meeting, on 18 May, the Committee considered revisions to programme 26 (Integration of social groups) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/47/6 (Prog. 26)).

Discussion

2. A number of delegations were of the view that before establishing new standards, existing standards should be reviewed and evaluated. Similarly, care should be taken not to promote instruments that might duplicate existing ones. Other delegations considered that promoting international instruments was a normal function of the United Nations.

3. One delegation expressed the view that additional international instruments on the rights of disabled persons were not necessary, as existing instruments conferred rights on all people whether able-bodied or disabled.

Conclusions and recommendations

4. The Committee recommended the approval of the revisions to programme 26 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, with the following modifications:

(a) In paragraph 26.16, second line, after the words "strengthened between the" should be inserted the words "the United Nations and";

(b) In paragraph 26.19 (b), the subparagraph should be replaced with "To formulate integrated policies, strategies and programmes based on comprehensive analyses of the impact of social and economic changes on ageing and the impact of the elderly on societies";

(c) In paragraph 26.30, at the end of the last sentence should be added the words "in collaboration with the Department of Public Information".